

Guernsey speeds up planning applications

News - 20/08/2018

Guernsey's Development Control team has launched a new, more streamlined procedure for providing pre-application planning advice.

The pre-application service, which is free of charge, provides advice and guidance prior to the submission of a planning application on all types of development such as exemptions queries, larger scale projects such as replacement dwellings and works to protected buildings.

Under the new process, pre-application enquiries will be required to submit certain details up front to allow officers to provide a more useful and in-depth response to applicants.

While meetings with Planning Officers will still be available, these will be tailored to the kind of complex schemes that require more in-depth advice at the initial stage.

Responses by telephone and email will become a more frequent way of responding to the simpler enquiries, rather than written responses by letter. It is hoped this will result in a quicker response time and improved service to the applicant.

Martyn Baudains said: "The benefits of obtaining pre-application advice are well known in the UK but in Guernsey we have suffered from long delays in receiving the written response from the Planning Officers, and the lack of detail in their initial advice meant that some applicants felt it wasn't that helpful.

"However, this can be greatly dependent on the quality of the information initially provided to the Development Control team and therefore the new pre-application process will focus partly on this aspect, making it much clearer what the planning officers need in order to provide useful advice.

"Pre-application advice isn't legally binding on the Planning Committee, it is just the professional opinion of an individual planning officer, but it greatly increases your likelihood of a positive outcome if you have sensibly explored your options at pre-application stage. This new system should allow an initial view to be obtained quickly by email, helping to keep costs down and speed up the overall planning application process."

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